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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 AMMAN 000329

SIPDIS
NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/08/2020
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [OVIP](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: JORDAN SCENESETTER FOR JOINT CHIEFS CHAIRMAN ADM
MIKE MULLEN

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (S//NF) SUMMARY: The Chairman's visit comes at a time when Jordan has made significant contributions both in Afghanistan and to broader regional security: encouraging Syria to seek a moderate Arab alternative to Iranian influence, maintaining its focus on a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and redoubling its efforts to strengthen ties with Baghdad. At the same time, Amman perceives U.S. military financial support as not keeping pace with the level of Jordanian regional contributions. Despite the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding on foreign assistance agreeing on an annual commitment of \$300 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) through 2014, Jordan continues to seek additional assistance in the form of supplemental appropriations. In 2009 Jordan was successful in obtaining \$150 million in forward-financed assistance in this manner, directly reducing our FMF commitment for 2010. Jordan has so far been disappointed with our lack of commitment to leave behind or store military equipment redeploying through Jordan from Iraq. End Summary.

Middle East Peace

12. (S//NF) Jordan continues to play a central role in fostering Middle East peace and a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both the King and his Foreign Minister Naser Joudeh have maintained steady pressure on other Arab states to offer modest deliverables to Israel. The King's efforts, which have met with some success, seek tangible steps such as overflight permission for Israeli air traffic, linking telecommunications networks with Israel, and reducing restrictions on travelers who have transited Israel. Recently however, the King has adopted a new approach, pressing PM Netanyahu and President Abbas to initiate immediate negotiations aimed at producing even limited Israeli concessions. Positive progress at the negotiating table, however meager, could provide crucial political cover for Abu Mazen, affording him a measure of maneuverability.

13. (S//NF) Given his public backing of U.S. attempts to restart Middle East Peace negotiations, the King views the lack of progress as damaging to his credibility. This damage

could limit his ability to play a constructive role in the future. At the same time, Jordanian officials consistently express concern that Jordan will be asked to assume a degree of guardianship over the West Bank, a move which many believe would alter Jordan's demographic makeup in ways that directly threaten its Hashemite rule, and consequently, the interests of the East Bank elites.

Iraq

¶4. (C) Jordan has been a leader in engaging with Iraq, using engagement to promote bilateral trade and encouraging Iraq to build stronger ties with Arab states rather than with Iran. As evidence of the proactive Jordanian position the King became the first Arab Head of State to visit Baghdad, in July 2008, and has named an Ambassador to Iraq. The King supports Prime Minister Maliki and sees progress as slow, but moving in the right direction. Senior Jordanian leaders have become concerned that increasing tensions between the central government and the Kurdistan Region will erupt in violent conflict and are skeptical that Iraq can maintain stability as U.S. forces withdraw.

¶5. (S) In response to a request by General Odierno to provide capacity-building assistance to the Iraqi Ministries of Defense and Interior, Jordan has hosted visits of Iraqi officers to learn about border security operations on the Syrian border and observe military cooperation through joint

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exercises with CENTCOM. Jordan hosted Iraqis at two 2009 seminars aimed at building the Iraqi capacity to manage their own Foreign Military Sales workload. Jordan has also said it will send a Defense Attach to Baghdad, but has not yet made plans to do so.

¶6. (S) Jordan signed a Technical Agreement with CENTCOM in July, laying the groundwork for redeployment of U.S. forces and equipment from Iraq through Jordan. In November, the first set of U.S. Brigade Combat Team (BCT) equipment redeployed through Jordan, signaling an appreciable increase in throughput with additional BCT sets redeploying in December and January. Over the course of the next six months, seven additional BCT sets of equipment are scheduled to transit Jordan en route to the port of Aqaba and ultimately to the U.S. Redeployment represents a significant boon to the Jordanian economy: \$15.1M in 2009. The military and political leadership of Jordan has been frustrated that the U.S. has not committed to leave equipment behind in Jordan to be donated, refurbished, or stored. Two further disappointments include the termination of jet fuel shipments through Jordan into Western Iraq, and the U.S. decision not to train Iraqi F-16 pilots in Jordanian flight schools.

Iran

¶7. (S//NF) Jordan is concerned about Iranian influence in the region, particularly the potentially destabilizing effect of an Iranian nuclear program, support for Hizballah and Hamas, support for the Huthi and other armed groups in Yemen, and Iran's role in Iraq and links with Syria. The King believes that the recent post-election violence in Iran exposes deep fissures in the Iranian polity that "makes the Supreme Leader look a bit less supreme," forcing Iran's leadership to turn inward on domestic issues and limiting their freedom and resources to act internationally. Especially with the recent buildup of U.S. military assets in the Persian Gulf, fear remains that Iran will try to counter these perceptions with a dramatic act. Jordan will support new UNSC sanctions against Iran, but will be loath to enforce those sanctions in the absence of progress in the Middle East Peace Process. Without a material improvement in the Peace

Process, any confrontation with Iran risks backlash from Palestinian groups who cast Tehran as their protector.

¶18. (S//NF) Jordan's senior leadership draws a direct link between the willingness of Arab states to counter Iran, and progress on Middle East peace, saying that Israeli and Sunni-Arab interests are perfectly aligned with respect to Iran. Arab governments are restricted in their ability to deal with Iran, they say, so long as Iran is seen as supporting the Palestinians against Israel. Realization of the two-state solution would consolidate the regional consensus against Iran, Jordan believes.

Syria

¶19. (S//NF) Jordan increased its engagement with Syria in the last half of 2009 attempting to draw Damascus toward an alignment with moderate Arab states and away from Iranian influence. The King and Syrian President Bashar Al Assad met at least four times in 2009, which resulted in agreements on a number of initiatives, including border demarcation, customs procedures, and commercial transport. Although Jordanian officials continue to be skeptical of Syrian intentions to follow through, Jordan is supported in its dialogue with Syria by Turkey, which is interested in increasing its ground transit of commercial goods through Syria to Gulf countries.

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Domestic Politics

¶10. (C) King Abdullah dissolved the unpopular Parliament and announced a new Cabinet in December 2009, ending months of infighting and legislative stalemate. The King has mandated that new elections take place before the end of 2010 with a new election law currently being drafted. It is unclear whether the new law will correct the disproportionate districting that systematically under represents urban Palestinian-Jordanians in Parliament. The current electoral system favors rural, traditionally East-Bank districts, over the cities. It is too soon to tell by how much the numbers might shift or how tribal or traditional East Bank interests would be affected.

¶11. (S//NF) We have been urging the Jordanians to re-invigorate social and political reforms, expanding political space for civil society, pressing electoral changes aimed at a more representative, inclusive system, and further loosening of state control over the economy. The King's economic and political changes face domestic opposition from tribal leaders and an array of entrenched East Bank interests. The latter include many in the military, security services, and bureaucracy, who enjoy a disproportionate share of the current system.

¶12. (S//NF) Jordan has made progress on the economic front: buying back debt, eliminating subsidies, and promoting a trade-based, market-oriented economy. The positive effects of those measures are starting to wane, in part, a ramification of the global financial crisis, but also due to poor budget management and poor management of its limited water and energy resources. Jordan is one of the world's most water-poor nations and is moving aggressively on independent and regional initiatives to address its water needs. GAMA, a Turkish company partially owned by General Electric was awarded an \$800 million contract to pump water from Southern Jordan's Disi aquifer to Amman. While a World Bank-led study continues on conveying water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea to rehabilitate the Dead Sea, generate hydropower, and provide desalinated water to Jordan, Israel,

and the Palestinian Authority, Jordan announced in May 2009, similar plans for the unilateral \$10 billion Jordan Red Sea Development Project to benefit Jordan only. Jordan has yet to secure the requisite funding to begin the single-country project.

¶13. (S//NF) Jordan's economy is also affected by its energy needs. Jordan is a net importer of energy and thus subject to market fluctuations for oil prices. It imports some of its fuel needs from Iraq, but poor infrastructure limits import quantities, which must travel overland by tanker truck. Consequently, the discount offered barely offsets transportation costs. Since 2003, Jordan has paid market rate for other imported fuel. Jordan sees nuclear energy as its future and the King has placed a priority on developing a civilian nuclear energy program. The GOJ is anxious to sign a Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA) with the United States, required for U.S. companies to provide nuclear reactors, fuel or materials. NCA negotiations are currently stalled however, with the Chairman of the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission objecting to assurances sought by the U.S. that Jordan will not refine or enrich uranium in Jordan. Meanwhile, the GOJ continues to advance its nuclear energy program and has signed either MOUs or NCAs with the United States, Canada, China, France, South Korea, the UK, and a number of other countries.

Military Assistance and Cooperation

¶14. (C) The U.S.-Jordan mil-to-mil relationship is among the most extensive in the region. In September 2008, an MOU on Foreign Assistance was signed with Jordan that included a

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commitment to \$300 million annually in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) through 2014. In 2009 Congress allocated \$150 million (of the \$300 million) in forward-financed FMF to Jordan through the Supplemental Appropriation (which will reduce the FMF commitment for 2010 by an equal amount.) In January, Jordan's top military advisor, Prince Faisal, and Minister of Planning met Defense and State Department officials and Members of Congress in Washington aimed at securing a pledge of funds through an anticipated Afghanistan supplemental appropriation. Although these assistance levels are substantial, Jordan is sensitive to decreases in FMF from the height of the war in Iraq when Jordan received large supplemental appropriations. For example, combined FMF was \$497 million in 2008, \$307 million in 2007, and \$305 million in 2006.

¶15. (U) In addition to FMF, Jordan is one of the largest recipients of Individual Military Education and Training (IMET) funding, which will be \$3.8M in 2010 and \$3.7M in ¶2011. The program pays immense dividends, developing strong professional bonds between U.S. and JAF officer corps.

¶16. (C) Jordan makes significant contributions to U.S. regional security priorities. In July 2009, Jordan deployed a 712-soldier Ranger Battalion to Logar Province in Afghanistan to provide election security (TF 222). The JAF deployed the second battalion rotation in support of OEF in January 2010, despite the cost (pay entitlements) and risk to their soldiers' safety. JAF leaders have intimated that they would advocate even larger-scale deployments (a brigade), if the pay/entitlement expense were not so burdensome. In fact, during the Joint Military Commission in November 2009, MG Mash'al Al Zaben, Chief of Staff for Strategy, stated that Jordan would stay in Afghanistan until the last U.S. soldier came home. In October, Jordan deployed the second rotation of a Special Operations company (TF 111) that conducts combat operations alongside U.S. Special Forces. The third rotational company deploys in February 2010.

¶17. (S/NF) Following the December 30 suicide bombing by a

Jordanian national in Khost, Afghanistan, Jordan has experienced increased calls by opposition groups and non-governmental figures to explain its Afghanistan assistance and end its security cooperation with the United States. So far, such calls and commentary in the press have received no traction with the government, which vigorously and publically defends its efforts to combat terrorism. Jordanian government officials have privately reiterated the commitment to maintaining their relationship with us, highlighting their deployments in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

¶18. (C) In May, Jordan completed a donation of 10 M60 tanks to Lebanon, funded by UAE. Jordan delivered to Yemen 25 M113 Armored Personnel Carriers in response to a request from State Department, funded by UAE. Jordan has offered to assist with other deployments, counter-piracy missions, and to host training courses and exercises for Iraqi, Lebanese, and other forces, but remains dependent on external financial support to fund its contributions. Jordan continues to supply forces to U.N. sponsored Peace-Keeping Operations around the world.

¶19. (S). Jordan is anxious to provide additional contributions to the fight in Afghanistan, and made this clear during HRH Prince Feisal's recent trip to Washington. OSD, Joint Staff and CENTCOM are reviewing their proposals.

¶20. (S) Despite the high levels of FMF and other security assistance, Jordan continues to request additional financial resources from external sources to make each contribution to regional security possible. For example, the Lebanon and Yemen donations were financed with funds from the UAE. Training programs for regional forces are financed through U.S. Anti-Terrorist Assistance (ATA) funds or the U.S. Security Coordinator (USSC). In addition, Jordanian law stipulates that its soldiers deployed overseas are entitled

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to approximately \$1,700 monthly in combat pay, which has been financed through the United Nations for peacekeeping operations. Jordan has not yet identified a source of combat pay funding for its Afghanistan deployments but is hopeful NATO will contribute.

¶21. (S) Jordan has used its FMF to improve its border security and defensive capabilities remaining cognizant of interoperability with U.S. forces. We are concerned that Jordan has focused too heavily on acquiring expensive new technology and needs to place more emphasis on the training and maintenance needs of existing programs.

Beecroft